

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today the House of Representatives voted to extend unemployment insurance benefits by passing the Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008 (H.R. 5749) by a vote of [274 to 137](#). Representative Xavier Becerra (CA-31), Assistant to the Speaker of the House and the only congressional member from Southern California on the Ways and Means Committee, voted for the bill.

H.R. 5749 was narrowly defeated yesterday by House Republicans despite receiving a strong majority vote of 279-144 when it was considered under suspension of the rules, requiring it to receive a two-thirds majority to pass.

“Last week the Department of Labor told us what working families already know: the economy is shedding jobs and the number of unemployed workers is rising at an historic rate,” Rep. Becerra said following today’s vote. “Extending a helping hand to working Americans who’ve lost their jobs not only benefits the unemployed worker, but provides additional stimulus to the economy through consumer spending. It’s a win-win policy that is smart and compassionate.”

Last Friday, the Department of Labor released its employment figures for May showing a loss of 49,000 jobs, and an unemployment rate of 5.5 percent – representing the biggest monthly rise in 22 years. To date nearly 325,000 more jobs have been lost than created this year.

H.R.5749 equips states with additional funds to continue providing unemployment payments to 3.8 million jobless Americans who have exhausted their 26 weeks of regular benefits, and are still looking for work. In states with higher levels of unemployment (six percent or higher), an additional 13 weeks would be available, for a total of 26 weeks of extended benefits. The money to pay for the legislation would come from the federal unemployment trust fund, which current has over \$35 billion in reserves.

While extending unemployment benefits is one of the most cost-effective and fast-acting ways to stimulate the economy, the Bush Administration opposes H.R. 5749.

“I urge President Bush to reconsider his opposition to this common sense bill, and stop impeding the progress we seek to make for the American people,” Rep. Becerra said.

### [BECERRA.HOUSE.GOV](https://becerra.house.gov) ###